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THE MAKING OF THE NATIONS: SOUTH AMERICA. By W. H. KOEBEL. London: Adam & Charles Black, 1913.

Books which form part of a series, however vague the idea of that series may be, are supposed—one does not know just why—to strike the public mind with a greater weight of authority than do isolated volumes. Adventitious aid of this sort would seem to be needed in the case of Mr. W. H. Koebel's volume *South America* in the series called "The Making of the Nations" which Adam & Charles Black, of London, are publishing. To write of the making of nations—even South-American nations—is a somewhat serious task; a man may, if he were of a fearful heart, stagger in this attempt. Yet there is internal evidence to show that Mr. Koebel has discharged this task, if conscientiously, yet with a regrettable indifference. Tokens of this are a dreary monotony in the cadences of his sentences and also certain uses of the King's English such as alert writers are wont to avoid. It is strange that in a work designed for instruction Mr. Koebel should write: "Although Columbus some years afterwards bitterly complained of the type of European whom he found at Hispaniola, there is no doubt that he himself was largely responsible for *their* presence." Again, when we read that "the thunder of such edicts, *worn out by the voyage*, died away ere they reached the islands," we have some difficulty in conceiving how thunder may suffer attrition as the result of a voyage. Less subtle but even more striking is the picture called up of the famous chief Lantaro receiving "his *baptism of spears* and of fire." Moreover, to speak of a man's "*obtaining* the worst of it," as Mr. Koebel does, seems wantonly to spoil a perfectly good idiom. Faults such as these would perhaps be tolerable if the style which they mar were only alive, as it might conceivably be, in spite of them. On the other hand, nothing except extreme weariness could well account for such a sentence as the following: "It is difficult to imagine a more callous or atrocious proceeding than this, *but* undoubtedly financial considerations lay at the bottom of it."

As to the substance of the book: Mr. Koebel has devoted far more space to a colorless résumé of the period of South-American conquest and colonization than will seem worth while especially to American readers. Most school texts contain crisper and more suggestive accounts of several of the persons and events he touches upon. The latter half of his narrative, which deals with the fortunes of individual South-American States, contains material not so easily accessible elsewhere. One sees that this part of the book might possess interest but for the unrefreshing style and the comparatively unideal treatment.